1982. Open Invitation

There were no mirrors in true Bastion. Even the Great Mirror Morgan had used to switch the illusory realm with reality only existed within the illusion.

And that was for a good reason.

The Others.

Reflections had a mind of their own in true Bastion. There were strange, alien, and harrowing beings populating the mirrors here, and they could sometimes enter the real world uninvited.

Morgan did not know the details, but she knew that her family had suffered greatly, and had paid dearly, for laying claim to the stronghold of the Demon of Imagination in the distant past.

This topic was a taboo that not even the elders dared to discuss.

All that she knew was that the Great Mirror had to be covered at all times, and that one had to be careful around reflective surfaces in true Bastion - especially the lake itself. There was a set of rules one had to follow here and a set of prohibitions one had to adhere to, lest they wanted to lose their lives and put the lives of others in danger.

And yet, many of the elite Knights that had been allowed here still that had been allowed here still perished in chilling ways.

Morgan herself was a bit different, because she had been forced to face and kill her own reflection not long after becoming an Awakened - her father had escorted her to the Great Mirror personally on that day, and watched the battle until it was over.

That right of passage was... quite a memorable experience, for her.

So, she purposefully left the Great Mirror uncovered today, inviting the Others to come.

Obviously, that made the ruins of the ancient castle dreadfully dangerous for Morgan and her six Saints.

But it was going to be far more dangerous for her brother, the Prince of Nothing, without a doubt.

After all, most of his powers had to do with mirrors. He even carried a minor Mirror Domain in his soul something that made all attempts of defending a fortified position against him hopeless, since he could bypass almost any fortification easily by jumping between reflections.

However...

The true Bastion was one of the few places in the world - the only place, perhaps - where her brother's authority over reflections would not stay unopposed.

The powerful Nightmare Creatures dwelling in the forest were a threat to him, but the eerie beings that dwelled on the other side of mirrors were infinitely more dangerous.

After all, they could enter his domain, intercept him when he was jumping between reflections, feel his gaze when he spied through mirrors, and do many things that neither Morgan nor Mordret could even imagine.

Her brother would have to contend against the real mirror wraiths here.

That was the greatest obstacle that stood between him and conquering Bastion.

Of course, there were a few others.

Like the runic array that her father had carved into the ruins to protect them from the enemies of Clan Valor and from her monstrous brother in particular.

Or the Sentinel Swords he had left behind.

Or the insidious influence of the shattered moon, which almost no one knew about.

That was the dire battlefield that Morgan had prepared to stack every possible advantage in her favor.

The enemy was too strong, and so, she had to be both resourceful and willing to risk it all.

Hopefully, that would be enough to stall her brother long enough for the Song Domain to fall...

But, of course, Morgan wanted more than that. She had greater ambitions than merely serving as his foil.

She wanted to win.

She wanted to win and erase the shame of her pitiful loss in Antarctica, so that she did not have to think about it again, and feel fear ever again.

‘...You bastard.’

Smiling darkly, Morgan ascended the crumbling wall of the ruined fortress and looked upon the moonlit lake.

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That had happened... ages ago.

The events unfolded pretty much exactly as Morgan had anticipated, even though she would have loved to be mistaken for once.

Not long after the real Bastion replaced its illusory twin, Mordret attacked from the depths of the dark forest.

They did not know how much he was stifled by the presence of the Others, exactly, but his power was definitely diminished quite a lot compared to Rivergate — he seemed to be reluctant to use his powers often, as if wary of something, and his usual omniscience was replaced by doubt.

Still, her brother was a fiend, and he definitely did not lack determination. That first battle was both intense and chilling, testing the very limits of their resolve and mental endurance.

The Mirror Lake boiled as the three remaining Saints of the House of Night, the vessels of the Prince of Nothing, and the dreadful Nightmare Creatures that dwelled in the depths clashed with each other in a frenzied storm of violence. The water of the lake would have turned red if it wasn't painted black by the veil of night already, and tall waves assaulted its shore.

The three government Saints and Morgan herself defended the four sides of the ruined fortress. The crumbling walls quaked and groaned, sometimes collapsing into piles of rubble, and the dark edifice of the broken keep towered above them like a gravestone.

A squall of terrifying forces was unleashed, making Morgan feel a rare moment of relief at her decision to hide the illusory Bastion in the Great Mirror.

If she hadn't, the collateral damage caused by the titanic battle among the civilian population of the city would have been incalculable.

The first battle lasted for a while, but eventually, it became apparent that neither side would be able to achieve a sweeping victory. Of course, Morgan and her Saints were still inferior to the enemy in terms of pure numbers... which was a funny thing to say, considering that their enemy was a single man.

Still, they had the advantage of being the defending side — and not only that, but being the defenders of a fortress designed specifically to protect the Valor family from its monstrous scion.

Tied by the eerie threat of the Others and bound by the runic array carved into the walls of the ancient castle, Mordret could not rely on his bizarre powers and endless tricks. He was more or less limited to only using skill and brute strength to destroy them, and although his strength was not at all lacking, Morgan and her people were quite powerful themselves.

In fact, some of them were the epitome of power.

Morgan, the Princess of War. The chilling and beautiful wraith, Soul Reaper Jet, known and feared by most Awakened. Saint Athena, Raised by Wolves a bona fide war goddess who had led her warriors into a hopeless siege on the Forgotten Shore, and only gotten stronger and more heroic since then. Saint Kai, the Dragon Slayer...

And three last Saints of a fallen Great Clan, who burned with the desire to avenge their kin.

It was quite an epic battle. In fact, it was just the kind of battle that people would sing about centuries later... it was just a pity that no one was there to witness it, and tell the tale.

Perhaps if Nightingale picked up the microphone once again…